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THE WOODS

DOUGLAS MALLOCH

1. Poetry, American

NBI
Malloch

THE WOODS

DOUGLAS MALLOCH

THE WOODS

BY

DOUGLAS MALLOCH
AUTHOR OF "IN FOREST LAND"

CHICAGO
AMERICAN LUMBERMAN

NEW YORK
GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY

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To

MY SON DOUGLAS

1902-1909

38x504

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THE WOODS

POSSESSION

THERE'S some of us has this world's goods,
An' some of us has none —
But all of us has got the woods,
An' all has got the sun.
So, settin' here upon the stoop,
This patch o' pine beside,
I never care a single whoop —
Fer I am satisfied.

Now, take the pine on yonder hill:
It don't belong to me;
The boss he owns the timber — still,
It's there fer me to see.
An', 'twixt the ownin' of the same
An' smellin' of its smell,
I've got the best of that there game,
An' so I'm feelin' well.

POSSESSION (continued)

The boss in town unrolls a map
An' proudly says, "It's mine."
But he don't drink no maple sap
An' he don't smell no pine.
The boss in town he figgers lands
In quarter-sections red;
Lord! I just set with folded hands
An' breathe 'em in instead.

The boss his forest wealth kin read
In cent an' dollar sign;
His name is written in the deed —
But all his land is mine.
There's some of us has this world's goods,
An' some of us has none —
But all of us has got the woods,
An' all has got the sun!

WHEN THE GEESE COME NORTH

THEIR faint "honk-honk" announces them,
The geese when they come flying north;
Above the far horizon's hem
From out the south they issue forth.

They weave their figures in the sky,
They write their name upon its dome,
And, o'er and o'er, we hear them cry
Their cry of gladness and of home.

Now lakes shall loose their icy hold
Upon the banks, and crocus bloom;
The sun shall warm the river's cold
And pierce the Winter's armored gloom;

The vines upon the oaken tree
Shall shake their wavy tresses forth,
The grass shall wake, the rill go free —
For, see! The geese are flying north!

SPRING FEVER

NOT exactly lazy —
Yet I want to sit
In the mornin' hazy
An' jest dream a bit.
Haven't got ambition
Fer a single thing —
Regaler condition
Ev'ry bloomin' Spring.

Want to sleep at noontime
(Ought to work instead),
But along at moontime
Hate to go to bed.
Find myself a-stealin'
Fer a sunny spot —
Jest that Springy feelin',
That is what I've got.

SPRING FEVER (continued)

Like to set a-wishin'
  Fer a pipe an' book,
Like to go a-fishin'
  In a meadow-brook
With some fish deceiver,
  Underneath a tree —
Jest the old Spring fever,
  That's what's ailing me!

MARCH

IN what a travail is our Springtime born! —
'Mid leaden skies and garmenture of gloom.
Wild waves of cloud the drifting stars consume
And shipless seas of heaven greet the morn.
The forest trees stand sad and tempest-torn,
Memorials of Summer's ended bloom;
For unto March, the sister most forlorn,
No roses come her pathway to illume.
Yet 'tis the month the Winter northward flies
With one last trumpeting of savage might.
Now stirs the earth of green that underlies
This other earth enwrapped in garb of white.
And while poor March, grown weary, droops and dies
The little Springtime opens wide its eyes.

CHILDREN OF THE SPRING

WHAT means the Spring to you? —
The tree, the bloom, the grass;
Wide fields to wander through;
A primrose path to pass;
Bright sun, and skies of blue;

The songs of singing streams;
The rippling riverside
Awakening from dreams;
Fair-browed and azure-eyed —
Oh, thus the Springtime seems.

Yet not for such as you
She comes with song and voice,
'Tis not for such as you
She makes the heart rejoice,
She comes with skies of blue.

CHILDREN OF THE SPRING (continued)

Spring's children are the ill —
'Tis these she comes to cheer;
Upon the window-sill,
Within the chamber drear,
She sits her song to trill.

On narrow cots they lie
Within the quiet room,
Their sky a square of sky
Cut from the inner gloom,
From dreary walls and high.

Spring means so much to these,
The prisoners abed! —
The perfume of the breeze,
The birdsong overhead,
The echoed melodies.

The window open wide —
Behold, the Spring is here!
No more the countryside
Is dim and dark and drear;
Now stronger runs the tide.

CHILDREN OF THE SPRING (continued)

The pale and patient wife,
  Her babe upon her breast,
Forgets the night, the knife,
  And sleeps the sleep of rest,
Awakening to life.

The old, the very old,
  Behold in budding Spring
Another year unfold —
  And life, a tinsel thing,
Is turned again to gold.

And e'en the empty cot,
  Whose Spring has come too late,
The one who now is not,
  The one who could not wait,
The Spring has not forgot.

For, see! the Springtime stands
  Our drooping eyes to raise
To fair and shining strands;
  The Springtime comes and lays
A lily in his hands.

"LIFE"

MAN, thrust upon the world, awakes from sleep,
Knowing not whence he came nor how nor why.
His earliest impulse is an infant cry,
His final privilege is that to weep.

A combatant although he sought no strife,
A guest unwelcome come unwillingly,
Given his vision that he may not see,
He names this unnamed paradox his life.

He learns to walk the forest and to love
Its green and brown, its song and season's change,
Yet will not taste a berry that is strange
Or tread a pathway that he knows not of.

"LIFE" (continued)

Skeptic and doubter of the flow'r and tree,
He questions this and that investigates —
Yet drinks the beaker offered by the fates
And leaves unsolved the greater mystery.

THE PASSENGER PIGEONS

WHERE roam ye now, ye nomads of the air,
The old-time heralds of our old-time Springs?
Once, when we heard the thunder of your wings,
We looked upon the world — and Spring was there.

One time your armies swept across the sky,
Your feathered millions in a mighty march
Filling with life and music all the arch
Where now a lonely swallow flutters by.

THE PASSENGER PIGEONS (continued)

Where roam ye now, ye nomads of the air?
In what far land? What undiscovered place?
Ye may have found the refuge of the race
That mortals visit but in dream and prayer.

Perhaps in some blest land ye wing your flight,
Now undisturbed by murder and by greed,
And there await the coming of the freed
Who shall emerge, like ye, from earth and night.

JUNE

I KNEW that you were coming, June, I knew
that you were coming!
Among the alders by the stream I heard a
partridge drumming;
I heard a partridge drumming, June, a wel-
come with his wings,
And felt a softness in the air half Summer's
and half Spring's.

I knew that you were nearing, June, I knew
that you were nearing —
I saw it in the bursting buds of roses in the
clearing;
The roses in the clearing, June, were blushing
pink and red,
For they had heard upon the hills the echo of
your tread.

JUNE (continued)

I knew that you were coming, June, I knew
that you were coming,
For ev'ry warbler in the wood a song of joy
was humming.
I know that you are here, June, I know that
you are here —
The fairy month, the merry month, the
laughter of the year!

THE BIGGER THING

JEST yesterday I watched an ant
A-totin' in the summer sun;
I saw him puff an' pull an' pant
With little burdens, one by one.
A wisp of straw acrost his way
Once kept him busy fer an hour,
An' ant-miles long he walked that day
To git around a bloomin' flower.
The sand he carried grain by grain —
Great boulders thet he had to lift —
An', with his engineerin' brain,
He sunk his shaft an' run his drift.
An' then at night a Bigger Thing,
To which the Little Thing must kneel,
Creation's self-appointed king,
Wiped out the anthill with its heel.

THE BIGGER THING (continued)

O self-made boss of things thet creep
An' walk an' fly, an' yet are mute,
When I consider how you keep
Your kingdom of the bird an' brute,
When I consider how you speak
Your will among the smaller folk
An' send your message to the weak
In flyin' lead an' flamin' smoke,
When I consider how you stalk
The quiet wood with evil breath
An' leave behind you, as you walk,
A path of pain an' trail of death,
I wonder how 'twould seem to you,
The silent people's lord an' king,
To tremble when you heard it, too —
The comin' of some Bigger Thing?

THE CHICKADEE

THERE'S somethin' 'bout the chickadee
  Thet's, somehow, awful cheerin';
Around the shanty door it bums
An' gethers up the crusts an' crumbs
  Cook scatters in the clearin'.

It gethers up the crusts an' crumbs
  An' jest as glad it chatters
As if it fed on biscuit fine
All soaked in milk er dipped in wine
  An' served on silver platters.

My share of life is crusts an' crumbs
  I find somehow er other;
An' how I wish thet I could be
Like you are, Mr. Chickadee,
  My cheerful little brother!

JIM

IF you go to the lake
An' you follow the road
As it turns to the west
Of the mill
Till you come to a stake
A surveyor has throwed
Like a knife in the breast
Of the hill,
An' you follow the track
Till you come to a blaze
By the side of the same
In a limb,
You will light on the shack,
In the timber a ways,
Of a party whose name
It is Jim.

JIM (continued)

In a day that is flown,
'Mid the great an' the grand,
In a time when his hair
Wasn't gray,
He was commonly known
By a fancier brand
In a city back there,
So they say.
But it's Jim, only Jim,
Is the name thet he gives,
When you happen to bring
Up the same;
It is plenty fer him
In the woods where he lives,
Fer the man is the thing,
Not the name.

JIM (continued)

By the gleam of his eye
  Thet is steady an' clear,
    By the way he will look
      At you square,
You will know thet they lie
  Who would make it appear
    He was maybe a crook
      Over there.
In the church I have stood —
  Heard of preachin' a lot
    Thet I never could much
      Understand;
An' yet never the good
  From a sermon I got
    Thet I got from a clutch
      Of his hand.

JIM (continued)

I have half an idee
  Thet, if back you could turn
    To the start of the trail
      Fer a spell,
Thet a woman you'd see,
  Thet a lot you would learn —
    Thet the regaler tale
      It would tell
Of a fellah too fond,
  Of a woman too weak,
    Of another who came
      To her door —
Then an endless beyond,
  Lips thet never must speak,
    An' a man but a name
      Evermore.

JIM (continued)

If you go to the town
An' you follow the street,
By the glitter an' glow
Of the light,
To a mansion of brown
Where the music is sweet
An' the lute whispers low
To the night,
In the dark of a room
At the end of a hall,
Where the visions of old
Flutter in,
There she sets in the gloom,
She, the Cause of it all,
In the midst of her gold
An' her sin.

JIM (continued)

If you go to the lake
An' you follow the road
As it turns to the west
Of the mill
Till you come to a stake
A surveyor has throwed
Like a knife in the breast
Of the hill,
An' you follow the track
Till you come to a blaze
By the side of the same
In a limb,
You will light on the shack,
In the timber a ways,
Of a party whose name
It is Jim.

SETTIN' IN THE SUN

I RECKON the party who sets on a throne
Has a perfectly miser'ble time;
There always is someone a-pickin' a bone
With a king or a monarch sublime.
Some calculate maybe that bein' a king
Is a job that is gen'ally fun —
Well, well, it may be,
But the best thing, to me,
Is jest settin' right here in the sun.

I reckon the party who sets in the chair,
In the President's chair, an' all that,
Must tote on his person consider'ble care
An' a passel of woe in his hat.
Some calculate maybe it's fun to be boss
Or even for office to run —
Well, that may be so,
But the best thing I know
Is jest settin' right here in the sun.

SETTIN' IN THE SUN (continued)

I reckon the party who sets up on high
He may wish for a moment that's calm.
It's awful to set there an' find by-an'-by
That you've done gone an' set on a bomb.
I calculate, if they should blow up a king,
In spite of the good he has done,
Nary king he will be;
But me, as for me,
I'll be settin' right here in the sun.

THE PINE-TREE FLAG

OUR woodsbred northern women (There
were no weaklings there:
Maine, Hampshire, Massachusetts, Ver-
mont, their glory share;
They were New England women, as brave
as they were fair) —

Our woodsbred northern women (They
sent their sires and sons,
The husbands of their bosoms, their well-
beloved ones,
To dare the foeman's anger and to face the
foeman's guns) —

Our woodsbred northern women (whose
men went forth to war)
Wove 'mid the woods a banner their bairns
and brothers bore,
Wove 'mid the woods a banner to carry on
before.

THE PINE-TREE FLAG (continued)

Our woodsbred northern women wove not
in red or gold;
There were no stripes of crimson, no con-
stellations bold;
It was a simpler pattern their aspirations
told.

Our woodsbred northern women a simpler
flag disclose;
Upon the snowy linen like their New Eng-
land snows,
By women's hands embroidered, a single
pine-tree rose.

Our woodsbred northern women knew
naught of warlike things,
The bloody skill of soldiers, the heavy pomp
of kings;
They knew no better music than that the
pine-tree sings.

THE PINE-TREE FLAG (continued)

Our woodsbred northern women (There
were no weaklings there)
Wove not a blood-red banner for sire and
son to bear —
But northern snow, and pine-tree, and pur-
ity, and pray'r.

Our woodsbred northern women (whose
men went forth to war)
Sent them not forth in passion to fight on
sea and shore
But with a holy purpose gave up the sons
they bore.

Our woodsbred northern women, no more
against the skies
Your strange, unwarlike banner in cause or
conflict flies;
But we see your souls courageous in your
children's children's eyes.

INSPIRATION

A POET sang of human things,
Of gorgeous queens and mighty kings,
And gems that glisten;
He praised the brassy front of show,
The ruby's fire and diamond's glow,
Yet none would listen.

He wove him many labored rimes
Of ended days and coming times,
Of deeds that stirred him;
He wrote of pomp and circumstance,
The flap of flag, the light of lance,
But no one heard him.

And thus he learned to know the pain
Of him who sings but sings in vain
To ears averted,
Like one who wakes his sweetest tone
To unresponsive walls of stone
In halls deserted.

INSPIRATION (continued)

When all the merry melodies
He sang his fellow men to please
  Brought none to hear him,
He turned from splendor and from pelf
To sing a measure for himself,
  A song to cheer him.

He wrote a song of long ago —
A vale where yellow lilies grow
  Beside a river,
A path that leads the weary feet
Where meadowland and waters meet
  And rushes quiver.

He wrote a song of childhood days,
Of pleasant shade and wooded ways
  And summer quiet —
A bridge that spanned a gushing rill,
A humble cot upon a hill,
  With roses by it.

INSPIRATION (continued)

'Twas not the creature of his art,
This song upwelling from his heart
  In moments lonely;
With memory his eyes grew dim,
For then his own soul sang to him,
  The poet only.

But other mortals heard his tale
Of woodland path and verdant vale
  To heaven winging,
And men who scorned his song before
Sought out the poet's open door
  To hear him singing.

Thus came to him his mistress Fame,
Clad in her aureole of flame
  And smile supernal;
No more a fleeting vision now,
She placed upon the singer's brow
  The kiss eternal.

INSPIRATION (continued)

And then the poet, fool and sage,
Turned gently from his written page,
  While bravos thundered,
And, when he saw the listening throng
Of those who once had spurned his song,
  He greatly wondered.

TO A CAGED BIRD

VOICE of the forest, tongue by which it speaks
The throbbing gladness of its vernal time,
No more, no more, your rising pinion seeks
The heights sublime.

Voice of the forest, once your gay wings beat
Against the mountain diademed with stars;
Now do men bid you sing a song as sweet
To prison bars.

Only a singer that they, passing, heard
And then desired, like book and pipe and bowl —
Knowing nor caring when they cage a bird
They cage a soul.

THE CHICKAMAUGA OAK

SEPTEMBER came with harvest sun,
The alchemist of old,
Across the fields of green to run
And turn them into gold.
But here was neither corn nor grain,
Nor need of alchemist,
For verdant vale and upland plain
No busy plow had kissed.

The men who once had turned the sod
And scattered here the seed
O'er other hills and valleys trod
To serve their dearest creed.
A hotter sun shone overhead,
The cannon's sulphur breath;
They sowed the seed whose bloom is red
And final fruit is death.

THE CHICKAMAUGA OAK (continued)

Here stood the Chickamauga oak
That cool September morn
And from its night of sleep awoke
To hear the blare of horn,
To hear the tramp of marching feet,
The steady clank of steel,
The hoofbeats of the horses fleet
And rumble of the wheel.

Around it broke the crimson gale,
Up rose the clouds of war;
Down poured the slanted sheets of hail
On Chickamauga's shore.
Red lightning flashed from barking gun
While cannon thundered by,
And son and sire and sire and son
Exchanged their battle cry.

THE CHICKAMAUGA OAK (continued)

Above them neutral still it stood,
The Chickamauga oak,
Nor questioned whose the purpose good
And whose the wrongful stroke;
And, when the line of battle passed
Where broke the storm anew,
Impartially its shade it cast
On fallen gray and blue.

The battle long is ended now,
The fife and drum are still;
Again the men of Georgia plow
The fertile field and hill.
Again the bright September sun
Turns waving grain to gold
And still the crystal waters run
As in the days of old.

THE CHICKAMAUGA OAK (continued)

Still stands the Chickamauga oak —
  But now beneath its shade
Lie those who parried stroke and stroke
  And wielded blade and blade.
For north and south, for blue and gray,
  Impartially it grieves,
And lays on both their graves to-day
  The cerement of its leaves.

SUMMERTIME

THE leaves upon the alders clapped their hands, their little hands —
An errant breeze had teased them into laughter.
A ray of sun went dancing o'er the lands, the fertile lands,
The perfume of a rose came running after.
The waters of the river caught their smile, their cheery smile,
And rippled joy to ev'ry merry comer.
A robin fluttered softly to the stile, the shady stile,
And raised his head to sing a song of Summer.

SUMMERTIME (continued)

A dainty maid came tripping o'er the grass,
the springing grass,
The alder touched her gently on the
shoulder.
The zephyr kissed the tresses of the lass,
the little lass,
The saucy ray of sun was even bolder.
The waters came to meet her, lapped her
feet, her tiny feet,
The roses threw their perfume all around
her.
'Twas then I knew the Summertime, the
Summertime complete —
'Tis Summertime forever since I found
her!

CONTRAST

NATURE loves neither silences nor noise,
She has her silence and she has her sound.
Yet all the melody that she employs
But serves to make her silence more profound.

The sweeping desert, yellow, bare and mute,
Seems deader for a wheeling vulture's scream.
The single quaver of a lonely lute
But makes the night seem nearer to a dream.

The sea is silent far from shores unseen,
Save where a ripple tumbles to abyss;
As whitened water makes the green more green,
The day is calmer for the bubble's hiss.

CONTRAST (continued)

From such as these I learn the forest's charm —
'Tis not its silence, silent though it be;
It is its sound unpoisoned with alarm,
Its whisper like the whisper of the sea.

Shouting nor silence, neither enters here —
Only the melody of far-off things.
A drifting cloud makes skies more fair appear,
The wood is stiller for the whir of wings.

RAIN

RAININ', is it? So it is —
An' I knew it would.
When a man has rheumatiz
In this old left stem of his
He can tell as good
When it's go'n' to leak
As your fancy weatherman
Down here in Chicago can,
If he thinks a week.
An' I guess it's jest because
Rheumatiz an' Nature's laws
Sort of work together —
Lots of moisture in the air,
Rheumatiz a-plenty there,
Both mean stormy weather.

RAIN (continued)

This left stem of mine can smell
  Water miles away;
This old stem of mine can tell
Fifty furlongs from a well
  Where it ought to lay.
  An' I'll tell you why:
This old stem an' me has tramped,
Waded, swum an' drove an' camped,
  Never gittin' dry,
Forty Winters, forty Springs;
Do you wonder thet she sings
  When she smells the water?
If you fellahs really knew
All that laig an' me went through
  Guess you'd think she oughter.

RAIN (continued)

You ain't never had the luck
  Swampin' in the snow;
None of you ain't never stuck
To your boot-tops in the muck
  When it's ten below.
  There ain't none of you
Ever drove the Chippeway
In the early days of May
  When a norther blew,
When the river water froze
In your boots an' in your clo'es —
  Freezin', thawin', freezin'.
If this stem of mine finds out
When there's water 'round about,
  Surely there's a reason.

RAIN (continued)

An', besides, there's quite a line
  Of such signs of rain;
There is many another sign
'Ceptin' this old stem of mine
  Thet is just as plain.
  There is bunions yet —
Fer a corn er bunion is
'Most as good as rheumatiz
  Prophesyin' wet.
When you see a cat eat grass,
When you see the small-mouth bass
  Sendin' up a bubble,
When you hear a rain-crow caw —
It is simply Nature's law
  Indicatin' trouble.

RAIN (continued)

Rainin', is it? So it seems;
It's a nasty night.
Yonder how the street lamp gleams! —
Like the light you see in dreams,
Soft an' far an' white,
Like the light you see
When you let life's half-hitch slip,
When you kind of lose your grip
On the things thet be.
An' I sometimes think the shore
Thet we all are headin' for
Looks so far an' ghostly
'Cause we're lookin' (like to-night
We are lookin' at the light)
Through a fog-bank mostly.

RAIN (continued)

How the asphalt pavements shine! —
  Almost lookin' clean.
Ev'ry lamp post makes a line
Like the shadow of a pine
  On a snowy scene.
  In the gutter nigh
Little ripples curl an' comb,
Little dirty rivers foam,
  In an hour to die.
They are like the stream of life,
Full of work an' play an' strife,
  Proud with splash an' splutter.
Each believes himself a flood —
Most of us is only mud
  Runnin' down a gutter.

RAIN (continued)

Rainin'? Sure enough it is,
But it ain't the goods;
Doesn't git right down to biz
Like the whirling raindrops whiz
Up there in the woods.
It's a city shower,
Like the other kinds of stuff
In the city, mostly bluff,
Lastin' fer an hour.
Up there, when it rains, it rains,
Fillin' rivers, floodin' plains,
Down the mountains washin'.
Up there when a rain we git,
When we're really through with it,
Things are jest a-sloshin'.

RAIN (continued)

Fer a rainstorm in the brush
  Is the wettest thing,
Ground beneath you soft as mush
An' around you all a hush,
  Not a bird to sing —
  Jest the drippin' slow
Of the raindrops on the leaves,
Spillin' from a billion eaves
  On the earth below;
Jest a blanket in the mire,
Jest a smudgy kind of fire,
  Weak an' slow an' smoky;
Breakfast — pancakes simply lead;
Dinner — wet an' soggy bread;
  Supper — biscuits soaky.

RAIN (continued)

Rainin', is it? So it is.
  Glad I'm high an' dry.
When a man has rheumatiz
In this old left stem of his
  Keep inside, say I.
  Now, this city stuff
Ain't like woods rain near as wet,
Ain't like woods rain is, an' yet
  It is wet enough.
Course the woods rain is the best,
It is dampest, healthiest,
  Better altogether;
But I guess I'll stay inside
Tryin' to be satisfied
  With this city weather.

DOWN GRADE

YES, boy, I know — you do not think;
You only hear the glasses clink
And feel the bogus joy of drink.

Life looks all Summer through a glass;
The whisky road is green with grass —
But life and Summer both will pass.

It's easy now to drink or not,
To drink a little or a lot;
But after all your drinking, what?

May it not happen ere the grave
The thing you laugh at you will crave? —
The master will become the slave?

God! I have seen them: Boys like you,
The frolickers of fighting crew,
Who never thought and never knew,

DOWN GRADE (continued)

Who took the road that dips and gleams,
That runs ahead of singing streams
(Yet somehow never downward seems),

With this same foolish passion played,
The same old merry journey made,
Who took the road of easy grade —

Till night came on, till sank the sun,
Till shadows gathered one by one
Around the path, and day was done.

'Twas then they turned; but now the hill
Was high behind them, and the rill
Within the valley dark and still —

Around, the level of the plain;
Above, a rocky path of pain
To climb, if they would rise again.

I am no preacher called to preach;
I am no teacher fit to teach
You younger men of better speech.

DOWN GRADE (continued)

Yet I have walked the merry road
Where laughing rivers downward flowed,
And climbed again with all the load,

With all the load a man acquires
Who follows after his desires
Until he finds his lusts are liars,

Until he finds, as find he will,
The peace, the joy, his age to fill
He left behind him on the hill.

My preaching is not perfect, Jack;
Yet truth, at least, it does not lack —
For I have been there, boy, and back.

UNKNOWN

WE deck the grave of him who came back
home again to sleep;
But what of him unknown to fame for
whom the lonely weep?
Yea, what of him in unknown grave un-
marked by stone or tomb;
Shall over him no standard wave, no
Springtime roses bloom?

Weep not, dear heart, for him who lies be-
neath the Georgia pine;
He sleeps beneath more tender skies than
are these skies of thine,
And blossoms tremble o'er his head as
gentle and as fair —
The flowers above the unknown dead his
God has planted there.

UNKNOWN (continued)

And when the breeze, the southern breeze,
the pine above him swings
Of his beloved northern trees a melody it
sings —
Yea, like the roar of waves that sweep
upon an unseen shore,
He hears the sighing, in his sleep, of
cedars by his door.

THE IRISH

FER forty-odd year I have followed the timber
From the crooked St. Croix to the rollin' Cloquet,
An' there ain't any camp thet you yaps kin remember
Thet I haven't seen in my lumberin' day.
I've skidded with roundheads who'd only come over,
With hunyacks I've swamped it fer many a mile;
But the time thet I felt I was livin' in clover
Was bunkin' with lads from the Emerald Isle.

Fer who was the boys thet was catty an' frisky,
The first on a jam with a peavey in hand?
Who done the most work an' who drunk the most whisky
An' set us a pace on the water an' land?

THE IRISH (continued)

When the timber piled high at the bend in the river
Then who was the fellahs to break it in style?
Who laughed at the things thet made other men shiver?
The happy-go-luckies from Emerald Isle.

When it come to a scrap they was quick on the trigger;
To call them a name was to go to the mat.
They worshiped a woman an' hated a nigger
An' fought fer a friend at the drop of the hat.
They fought, when they fought, with the fists thet God give 'em —
No knife er no gun is an Irishman's style.
There never was yet any walkin' boss driv 'em,
Not even a boss from the Emerald Isle.

THE IRISH (continued)

A dago was first this America grabbin',
Who sailed out of Spain with a schooner er two.
It may be Columbus who set in the cabin —
I'll bet it was Irish thet made up the crew.
Fer fallin' the timber, er cussin' the cattle,
Er breakin' a rollway, er drivin' a spile,
Er ridin' quick water, er winnin' a battle,
Is fun fer the boys from the Emerald Isle.

I am old, an' the times an' the people are changin' —
The top-loader now has a derrick to help;
The college perfessors the forests are rangin';
The lumberjack now is a different whelp.
The woods of the North they shall pass into story,
A story we tell with a tear an' a smile —
But the men who will fill all its pages with glory
Will be mostly the lads from the Emerald Isle!

THE PATH

IT winds its way along the shaded hill,
Disdaining distance, seeking only ease.
It turns aside to linger by a rill,
It climbs a slope to rest beneath the trees
Or breathe the perfume of a Summer breeze.

Here time is nothing, haste a thing unknown—
The hot, straight highway for the craze of speed;
The path is made for them who walk alone,
Whose God is Nature, and the woods their creed,
To follow blindly where the path may lead.

No stern surveyor made it thus and so,
Nor north nor south nor east nor west it tends.
It dips to kiss the pool where lilies grow,
It rises joyously where ivy bends
And meets in fond embraces with its friends.

THE PATH (continued)

Through brooding branches and embroidered leaves
The sunshine filters in a golden rain,
Transforms the tufted weeds to shining sheaves,
The tangled grass to waving harvest grain,
The marshy muskeg to a purple plain.

This is a path of velvet from the loom
Of droning Summer. Never human hand
Wove such a pattern, bright with rose abloom
Along its border. Never artist planned
This brilliant carpet flung across the land.

Now princes leave their castles, kings their thrones,
And unattended walk these sylvan aisles.
They pause to muse beside this heap of stones
More beautiful than all the granite piles
Reared with slow labor on their ample miles.

THE PATH (continued)

Sweet, solemn splendor of the silent wood,
More dear you are than all the haunts of men;
For never mortal in your presence stood
And listened to the whisper of the glen
But songs forgotten sang to him again.

Perhaps it is his mother's voice he hears,
The faint reëcho of her cradle croon
That sends him groping down the ended years
To find again some long-discarded boon,
To find again some long-departed June.

Then, by the magic of the shade and sun,
Of tree and rose and brook and verdant sod,
This world shall seem to be that other one
Where feet walk never, yet where souls have trod —
And he shall hold communion with his God.

THE MYSTERY

HEARD a rustle in the brush
Only yesternight;
Heard a rustle in the hush,
Somethin' out of sight —
Jest a footfall on the ground,
Shakin' of a tree;
But we argued all around
What the thing could be.

Jack, the stable-boy, he said
Likely 'twas a colt —
Farmer's colt thet got its head,
Broke its halter holt.
Bill, the cookhouse flunkey, swore
'Twas a bear er cub
Huntin' round the cookhouse door
Fer a snack of grub.

THE MYSTERY (continued)

Pete, who likes to hunt when Fall
Comes around each year,
Said it wasn't that at all —
Thet it was a deer.
Frank, who drives the two-ox pair,
Said they made him laff,
Said their colt er deer er bear
Simply was a caff.

So they set an' argufied
What the thing could be;
Ev'ry fellah took a side,
Had a theory.
Jack he chinned it with the chaps,
Bill with all the boys;
Mac, who's deef, he said perhaps
There wasn't any noise.

THE MYSTERY (continued)

What the rustle was about,
No one ever knew;
But one fact I figgered out
From that gabby crew:
People look with diff'rent eyes,
Hear with diff'rent ears;
That what closest to them lies
Ev'rything appears.

Ev'ry nation is the best
To the man from there,
Ev'ry state beats all the rest
When their sons compare.
Do you wonder at the lot
Of religious creeds? —
Each a special God has got
Fer his special needs.

THE MYSTERY (continued)

Harps an' music fer the gay,
  Huntin' fer the red;
Atheists expect to stay
  Permanently dead;
Streets of sapphire fer the Jew;
  Fer the weary, rest —
Each, accordin' to his view,
  Thinks his heaven best.

An' I'm puzzled, I admit,
  Puzzled at the maze —
Heaven, you kin figger it
  Forty-seven ways:
Heaven with a street of gold;
  With a jasper gate;
Heaven where the very old
  Still must sit an' wait.

THE MYSTERY (continued)

If there are so many there,
  There beyond the blue,
Heavens round an' heavens square,
  Gentile, Injun, Jew —
All thet I can do is trust,
  Since they can't agree,
When I lay me "dust to dust"
  There'll be one fer me.

THE PLAYGROUND

THE city street, the city street,
Lies heavy on the town —
An awful avenue of heat,
Whose rays of yellow Summer beat
Upon the stones of brown,
Where little children's weary feet
Creep slowly up and down.

The houses rise, the houses rise,
Beside the thoroughfare;
Their windows look with bloodshot eyes
O'er huddled roofs to smoky skies,
And find no promise there;
And childhood's voice of laughter dies
In pestilential air.

THE PLAYGROUND (continued)

The city great, the city great —
It is so big a thing!
From city gate to city gate,
From somber dawn to even late,
It throbs with marketing;
It has no moment it may wait
To hear the children sing.

The little ones, the little ones,
The buds that never bloom,
(While underneath the breathless suns
The stream of life forever runs
Through arteries of gloom),
Look on your stately Parthenons
And find so little room!

There is a street, another street,
Beyond the city's wall,
Beyond the corridors of heat,
Where waters pure and waters sweet
In crystal cadence fall —
And to the children's tiny feet
Their liquid measures call!

THE PLAYGROUND (continued)

Its tenements, its tenements,
  Are neither grim nor gray;
And from each verdant eminence
Their crimson-throated residents
  Pour music to the day,
Their choristing inhabitants
  Sing loud a roundelay.

O fairy shores, O merry shores,
  Away from slime and sin! —
With leafy roofs and grassy floors,
Where robin nests and swallow soars
  When Summer days begin —
Oh, let us open wide the doors
  And ask the children in!

THE SWAMPER

I AM the under dog,
I am the low-down cuss,
I am the standin' joke,
I am the easy meat.
Fellah thet skids the log
Gits all the fame an' fuss —
What of the man who broke
Roads fer the hosses' feet?

Sing of the arm thet's strong,
Sing of the saw thet shines,
Sing of the chopper's might,
Sing of the boss's brain;
Who ever sung your song,
Swampers among the pines,
Fellahs who led the fight
Out in the snow an' rain?

THE SWAMPER (continued)

We are the pioneers,
We are the great advance,
We are the men who break
Roads with our horny hands.
Ours not the shouts an' cheers,
Ours not the singers' chants —
Ours but a path to make
Straight through the forest lands.

They who shall come shall reap
Glory thet we have won,
They who shall come shall claim
Praise an' the world's hooray.
Ours but a trust to keep,
Ours but a road to run;
Others shall walk to fame
After we lead the way.

THE SWAMPER (continued)

So it shall often be,
So it shall be in life,
So it shall often seem,
Seem in the things men do —
Sung in no history,
Heard in no tale of strife,
Oft shall the dreamer dream,
Fergot when his dream comes
true.

ASHES

Your remembrances are like unto ashes.— Job xiii:12.

THE light of my camp-fire lingers
When its ribbons no more arise,
Like the pressure of vanished fingers,
An echo of ended sighs.
I gaze on the smouldering embers,
I look in the heart of the fire,
And, somehow, my soul remembers
The thrill of an old desire.

There is something in embers gleaming,
There is something in coals aglow,
That quickens the soul to dreaming
A dream of the long ago.
The things of the past awaken —
A message, a face, a name;
There is balm to the soul forsaken
In the light of a dying flame.

ASHES (continued)

Oh, what are our hopes but ashes?
  Oh, what are our dreams but dust?
The jewel shall dim that flashes,
  The glittering sword shall rust.
Yet the faith of the lonely-hearted,
  The faith of the soul that's true,
On the ashes of days departed
  Shall kindle the fire anew.

SUNRISE

SOME folks run to sunsets,
Some folks run to noon,
Some folks like the evenin' best,
With its stars an' moon.
Sunsets may be purty,
Noontime fair to see,
But the mornin' I like most—
Sunrise time fer me!

Some folks like at twilight
Jest to set an' dream
Of the day thet's dyin' there
In the sunset gleam.
What's the use of cryin'
Fer the day's mistakes?—
I'm jest lookin' fer the time
When the sunrise breaks!

SUNRISE (continued)

An', if all the mornin's,
  All the days an' years,
Bring me nothin' thet I ask,
  Bring me only tears —
When this life is over,
  When my soul awakes,
I'll be lookin' to the east
  Where the sunrise breaks!

THE WANDERERS

A LITTLE church through dusty trees
Raised up its wooden spire,
One of religion's purities
Amid our mortal mire,
And one there came to open door
Made timid by his sin,
Made timid by the mark he wore,
And dared not enter in.

The while he paused he heard a whir —
Beside him trembled down
Another outcast wanderer,
The swallow of the town.
It fluttered through the open place,
It mounted to the choir,
Within the simple house of grace
Poured forth its notes of fire.

THE WANDERERS (continued)

And he who lonely lingered heard
  And something fell away;
He followed after singing bird
  Where sinners kneel to pray.
Yea, there the old remembrance died
  And there the new began;
For soon they worshipped side by side —
  The swallow and the man.

SYLVIA

IT was because the dawn was in her eyes,
It was because the night was in her hair,
Because I heard the forest in her sighs,
I held her fair.
She came upon me 'neath the huddled eaves,
She walked beside me in the maze of men —
Her sadness sadness of a wood that grieves,
Her smile the sun again.

Her voice was like the whispering of trees,
Her laughter like the tinkle of a rill;
Her cheeks blushed roses, roses such as these
Upon the hill.
She was a river in a thirsty land,
A changeless star in midnight skies to shine —
Her touch, to walk with Nature hand-in-hand —
And she was mine, was mine.

SYLVIA (continued)

So leave me in the wood a little while;
Here where the grass is greenest let me lie.
The sun shall bring me once again her smile,
The wind her sigh.
Here only do we seem no more apart,
In verdant ways beneath the skies of blue;
The stirring earth will seem a beating heart,
The heart, the heart I knew.

Once only she could bring the forest near,
In those old days amid the panting crowd,
Once only she could make the stars appear
Beyond the cloud.
So now the forest that her soul expressed
To my own soul is her interpreter —
In ev'ry wind that wanders east or west
I hear but her, but her!

THE IMITATORS

WE build our fronded temples high,
With arching roof and bended beam,
We rear our artificial sky
Where painted constellations gleam;
We praise the marble majesty
Our earthly artisans create —
Yet walk abroad and do not see
The heavens that we imitate.

THE SOUL

I FIGGER the soul of a man is the same
underneath of a coat er a shirt,
An' I figger the heart thet pumps life through
his frame is the same under di'monds er
dirt.
Fer his face may be homely an' tough be his
hide an' busted the bridge of his beak,
But the Soul of the cuss is a-settin' inside an'
awaitin' its moment to speak.

The Soul of the cuss is a-settin' 'way back,
until maybe the lobster fergits
There is any such thing as a Soul in the shack
to take note of his devilish fits.
But amuck with the gang, on the long mooch
alone, then it follows his footsteps to see;
God knows thet I tell what I know, fer my
own it has risen an' spoken to me.

THE SOUL (continued)

It has risen an' spoken its speech by the light
of the flickerin' flame of the fire,
It has come with its voice where the lamps
glittered bright on a mob thet was drunk
with desire.
Fer I know not the hour thet the visitor
brings — in the night, in the day, it is
near;
It has come when no step stirred the stillness
of things, it has come when a hundred
were here.

An' it knows all the past, ev'ry step of the road
I have traveled the years thet are gone;
In the Springtime of youth it was there when
I sowed in the fields thet was yellow with
dawn.
It has followed my trail in the woods an' the
town, it has stood by my side at the bar,
It has followed my trail either uphill or down,
an' has judged of my deeds as they are.

THE SOUL (continued)

So it stood by my side in that old-time affair
when the night turned to red in my eyes,
An' it knows jest how much of my story was
square an' it knows jest how much of it
lies,
Fer it saw the blow fall, an' it saw the steel
shine, an' it saw the thing leap to its
goal —
You can fool all the world with a yarn such as
mine, but you can't tell a lie to your Soul.

I have spit on the doors of their law-makin'
shops, I have spit an' have laffed at the
law;
I have drunk with their sheriffs an' played
with their cops, with my life as the stake
in the draw.
I have traveled their streets in the glare of the
sun, while the he-hounds were hot on the
track —
I have shaken them all, shaken all but the one,
but the one thet will never turn back.

THE SOUL (continued)

Fer the world may fergit, er the world may not know, er the world it may know an' not care,
But ferever beside me wherever I go still another walks close who was there.
Yes, the deed may be done an' the deed may be hid, may be hid by the snows an' the sod,
But the thing thet I planned an' the thing thet I did one witness will whisper to God.

They know me back home as a man who is dead an' who passed in his checks as he should,
An' I answer up here to a new name instead thet in every way is as good.
I have shaken the teeth of the hounds of the past, fergotten like all men who die,
But I know thet my Soul will be there at the last — fer my Soul knows thet I am still I.

LEISURE

I THANK the Lord that I have time
For things that pay no dividends,
For song and book and sunset gleam
And sweet companionship of friends.
The song may be some simple theme,
The book some poet's dreamy rime
For those who dare to pause and dream —
I thank the Lord that I have time.

I thank the Lord that I have time
To stop a moment by the way
To kiss the scented lips of flowers
And hear the voice of songbirds gay.
The lark announces morning hours,
Around my door the roses climb,
And Nature lures me to her bowers —
I thank the Lord that I have time.

LEISURE (continued)

I thank the Lord that I have time
To pause beside some other soul
Who falters by my poor abode
Upon the path to greater goal.
If I can help him on his road,
Can aid his weary feet to climb,
If I can ease him of his load,
I thank the Lord that I have time.

I thank the Lord that I have time
For humbler joys and humbler things.
I thank the Lord for lips that smile,
I thank the Lord for heart that sings.
If I in life's uncertain while
With word or song or cheery rime
Can light some pilgrim's dreary mile,
I thank the Lord that I have time.

THE SKY PILOT

Oh, that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men.— Jeremiah IX:2.

BY the wall of the busy city,
In the midst of the market place,
Ye have lifted on high a temple,
Ye have builded a house of grace.
Amber and red the windows,
Marble and tile the floor —
But I weep for a thousand pilgrims far
Who never have seen the door.

Gorgeous the gilded altar,
Pleasant the cushioned pew,
Thrilling the chorused music
Ringing the cloister through,
Wonderful thing the sermon,
Grilling the creeds absurd —
But I weep for a thousand woodsmen strong
Who never have known the Word.

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THE SKY PILOT (continued)

Build me no mighty temple,
  Build me no jeweled shrine —
Build me a house of worship
  Under the solemn pine.
I'll speak from a rough-hewn pulpit
  To men of a rough-hewn race;
And, with God's great help, I will bring them yet
  With the Master face to face!

THE CALL OF THE WOODS

TALK of your "call of the wild,"
"Nature" an' similar stuff!
Talk of "the call
Of the forest" an' all —
Haven't I heard it enough?
Why am I cranky an' riled?
What is it ailin' of me?
What's my complaint?
Jest "the woods!" If it ain't,
What in the world kin it be?

Out of the woods it breaks forth —
Call of the wild in the air.
What do I hear
With my listenin' ear?
Somethin' a-coaxin' me there.
Wind has swung 'round to the north,
Sky has a promise of snow,
Moon on the hill
It is silver an' chill;
An' I am longin' to go —

THE CALL OF THE WOODS (continued)

Breathin' the breath of the pine,
Walkin' the hayroad again,
Hearin' old tales
An' trampin' old trails,
Bunkin' with men thet are men —
Men thet are pardners of mine,
Fighters an' workers an' kings,
Men who have stood
By my side in the wood
At the beginnin' of things.

Woods? I have lived, man an' boy,
Up in the woods forty year,
Driven their streams
Where the quickwater gleams,
Fought 'em from store-boom to rear,
Tasted their pain an' their joy,
Drunk of their fun an' their woe,
Sorrow an' song,
An' it's there I belong —
Lord, but I'm crazy to go!

BROTHERS AND SONS

ON a dirty floor at a slimy bar in the anteroom of hell
I have seen them stand with a devil's leer,
I have heard the tales they tell —
I have heard them brag of the brutish things, I have heard them boast of shame,
Till I longed again for the Jewish God, for the God who smote with flame.
And I wondered much if there lingered still not a dream of boyhood land,
Not a tender thought of a mother's kiss or a touch of sister's hand.
For we wander far, and the years go by, and the boyhood vision fades,
Yet we are the sons of the mothers of men and brother to all the maids.

BROTHERS AND SONS (continued)

And it is not there in the wild alone that
the souls of men forget;
In the house of pride, on the polished stair,
where the gilded ones are met,
I have heard the tale that is often told on
the dirty bar-room floor
While the idle smiled, and the lounger
laughed, and the bestial asked for
more.
For the thing we are is the thing we are,
not the thing in garments new;
And the coat that fits is the tailor's coat,
but the man inside is you.
It is such as I, it is such as you, that have
made the jests and jades —
Yet we are the sons of the mothers of men
and brother to all the maids.

BROTHERS AND SONS (continued)

Yea, the sons we are of a motherhood, of a
mother-love, divine,
And I can not slander this mother yours —
if I do I slander mine;
Yea, the brothers are of a sisterhood of the
sisters loved or lone,
And you can not slander the least and say
that the world shall spare your own.
For a woman's name and a woman's fame
they are sweet, and frail, as flowers;
But the strength to shield and the arm to
wield for the woman's name are ours.
Let the God-made man keep his God-made
trust till his life's last twilight fades —
For we are the sons of the mothers of men
and brother to all the maids.

THE SNOW IS HERE

THE snow is here.
I heard it in the night
Upon the roof in marshaled measure tramp.
The passing year
Has changed the world to white
And set the seal of Winter on the camp.
But yesterday
A footpath down the hill
Touched hands with other roads that led afar;
But now the way
Is hidden 'neath the chill
Of diamonded drifts that glisten like the star.
We are shut in
From ev'ry distant thing,
That other life amid the world of men,
From dirt and din,
Until returning Spring
Shall find the road and waken us again.

THE SNOW IS HERE (continued)

The chore-boy now
His frosted finger blows
And makes his path from islanded door to door;
Like sturdy prow
He parts the billowed snows
And heaps his brands of comfort on the floor.
The fire he plies
With piles of pitchy pine
Until the flames roar upward in a gale;
And we arise
To breathe the wintry wine,
To plunge abroad and icy tasks assail.
So breaks the day;
So comes the arctic dawn
In this our little world when snow is here;
And so away
The months shall follow on
Till softer skies shall mark another year.

THE SNOW IS HERE (continued)

The horses stamp
In clouds of steamy smoke,
The teamster's voice of mastery await;
Their bits they champ
And shake their leather yoke —
And life breaks forth where life is isolate.
Now from the wood,
The timber on the hill,
Comes stroke of ax and sawyer's steady swing;
The tree that stood
Beside the frozen rill
In powdered snow to earth comes thundering.
Thus passes day
With shout and merry call,
With echoed blow and crosscut's swishy sweep,
Until the gray
Of eve envelopes all
And drives us back to shelter and to sleep.

THE SNOW IS HERE (continued)

Though this our life,
A rugged life and plain,
Of sudden danger and of slow reward,
The wind a knife,
A scimitar of pain,
With death to fight and frosty stream
to ford,
Though chill the way,
Laborious the toil,
Though rough the fare, the habitation
rude,
Though skies be gray,
Though stubborn be the soil,
And even day a night of solitude —
We fondly know,
We know, in other years
When we shall look again on sunny
seas,
This land of snow
Shall rise from out our tears
And dearest seem of all our memories.

THE LETTER

I CAN'T tell you, girl, how I love you — it is
something the woods never teach;
I can lie all the night and think of you, but I
can't put the matter in speech —
But it's love like the blue skies above you that
around the whole universe reach.

It is love that is wide as the arches of stars
from the east to the west;
It is love that is long as the marches of sunrise
to sunset and rest;
It is love that is strong as the larches that
mount to earth's uttermost crest.

In the woods we are rougher than others you
know in the parlors of town;
To the wolf and the wild we are brothers, we
are kin to the creatures of brown;
It is long since we crept to our mothers and
slept on our pillows of down.

THE LETTER (continued)

For we sleep in the huts of the humble and we
live on a sturdier fare;
And the music we hear is the rumble of thun-
ders of earth and of air
Where the pine and the tamarack tumble and
the pathway of progress prepare.

Yet this land is the land of the lover, the place
for a love such as mine;
Oh, sweet is the scent of the clover, but strong
is the heart of the pine;
Love's cup in the town bubbles over, but here
it is purple as wine.

We live and we love and we labor up here on
a mightier scale;
To the north and the night we are neighbor,
we are kin of the star and the gale;
The lightning it threats with its sabre, the
northwind it stings with its hail,

THE LETTER (continued)

And the heart of the man is made stronger
with the strength of the thing that he
fights,
And the love of his heart is made longer by the
length of the loneliest nights —
For the lover whose heart is a-hunger longs
most for a lover's delights.

The fellow away from the city the tricks of
the city forgets:
He can't say the thing that is witty, he can't
breathe his soul in regrets;
He can't say the thing that is pretty to please
the pink ear of coquettes.

For the bigness of life is about him, the big-
ness of heaven and star;
Though the city runs onward without him,
forgetting the forest afar,
When he speaks let no cleverness doubt him,
for he speaks of the things as they are.

THE LETTER (continued)

And this is the love that I bring you, the love
of the man out-of-doors;
And this is the song that I sing you, the song
that the nightingale pours,
The song that the nightingales fling you from
eventide's musical shores.

The shepherd boy carols his meter, and follow
the feet of his herds;
The song of the skylark is fleeter because of
the absence of words;
Is the language of mortals the sweeter, more
sweet than the music of birds?

My lips they may tremble to say it, however
my pulses may beat;
The tale that I tell you may weigh it and find
it a tale incomplete —
But here is my heart, and I lay it, all voiceless
and mute, at your feet.

THE LETTER (continued)

I can't tell you, girl, the old story, embellished
with city-bred lies,
The tale that a planet grown hoary still hears
with the olden surprise —
But the night is all starshine and glory because
I have looked in your eyes.

The night is all starshine and splendor up here
in the tamarack lands;
The night is all moonlit and tender because of
the touch of your hands —
And your eyes they may widen with wonder,
but I know that your heart understands.

SUCCESS

ALL night the tank conductor goes
Along the skidroad through the trees
An' sprinkles on the crispy snows
The water thet will fall an' freeze;
Thus, by the aid of his device,
Lays down an avenue of ice.

At morn the busy teams will bump
Along the way with mighty load
An' find a passage to the dump
Along the tank conductor's road —
Will pile their creakin' bolsters full
An' brag about the loads they pull.

There are a lot of us, I guess,
Who call ourselves "self-made" an' such,
Who talk about our own success,
Yet haven't done so very much.
Fer, ten to one, some other cuss
Went out an' iced the road fer us.

MOONRISE

I WATCH the fair moon climb the sky
And walk among the stars,
As one who walked a garden by
And met me at the bars —
And it was you, dear heart, drew nigh,
And he who waited there was I.

And I, ere Spring shall set me free,
Shall look on many moons;
Yea, I shall look on moon and tree
And live my dreamy Junes —
But ev'ry moon that I shall see
A memory of you will be.

MY MAN AN' ME

MY man an' me fer forty year
Have hiked it up the hill,
An' side by side, an' bound an' tied,
As was our youthful will.
He come upon me like a dream
Of all I hoped to be —
An' so we stood, fer ill er good
Made one, my man an' me.

It was a rosy way we went
When life was in the dawn;
I heard the birds, I heard the words
A young wife feeds upon.
His arm was 'round about my waist,
He led me tenderly —
'Twas long ago we traveled so
The road, my man an' me.

MY MAN AN' ME (continued)

Though still we travel side by side,
We travel now apart —
Fer older wives live lonely lives,
An' hungry is the heart.
'Twas long ago I felt the kiss
In youth he give so free —
Still side by side, but years divide
Us two, my man' an' me.

Yet once he held my hand in his:
We knelt beside a cross,
Together knelt, together felt
An' shared a common loss.
An' there was four instead of two
(Er so it seemed to be)
Yes, there was four — the babe I bore,
My God, my man an' me.

MY MAN AN' ME (continued)

The river yon is covered now
With Winter's ice an' snow;
Upon its breast no lilies rest
Where lilies used to blow.
But underneath the Winter's ice
The waters flow as free
As in the Spring we heard 'em sing
Their song, my man an' me.

So age may sit upon his lips
An' cool the speech of youth;
An' yet I know he promised so
To love, an' spoke the truth.
The Winter days of life may chill
The ways of such as we;
But 'neath the cold the love of old
Still warms my man an' me.

BACK ON THE JOB

THIS is the time of the bust-up,
This is the end of the trail;
Though your icin' you do,
Still the ground will come through
An' your icin' an' cussin' will fail.
The eaves are a-drippin' at midnight
An' out of the south comes a sob;
You kin talk about loss
All you like, Mister Boss,
But Spring has got back on the job.

You kin rave all you like of the timber
Thet lays in the woods at the stump,
You kin swear you will haul
Ev'ry stick of it all
To the road an' the bank an' the dump,
But she's got all creation ag'in you,
The sun an' the wind an' all that,
An' she'll bust ev'ry road
An' she'll stall ev'ry load
An' your timber will stay where it's at.

BACK ON THE JOB (continued)

You ought to know somethin' of woman —
  You've seen her both single an' wed;
You know you can't stir
Any notion in her
  When once it gits into her head.
But, of all of the contrary women,
  Miss Spring is the worst of the lot;
When you want her to freeze
She will thaw, if you please,
  An' she'll freeze when you're wantin' it
    hot.

No use to dispute with a heifer
  Er argue a case with a skirt;
If Spring wants to thaw,
Neither reason ner law
  Will keep her from doin' you dirt.
It's will er it's won't with a woman —
  She says when she won't er she will.
You kin talk till you're black
In the face, but the shack
  Will be bossed by the petticoats still.

BACK ON THE JOB (continued)

We think we're her lord an' her master,
  She swears she will love an' obey.
We think we're the head
Of the house, as she said
  We would be when we bore her away.
But a month er so after the weddin',
  When honeymoon season is flown,
She quits sayin' "dear"
An' she gits on her ear
  An' she kicks us plumb off of the throne.

It's likewise up here in the timber:
  We think we are runnin' the thing;
We're falling the trees
An' we're makin' it freeze —
  But all of a sudden it's Spring.
Then it's mix up a walk fer the swampers
  An' can the whole mackinaw mob;
No use fer the boss
Er the crew er the hoss —
  Miss Spring has got back on the job.

THE SPORT

MY boy, it's the end of the season —
Your campstake you've got in your clo'es;
It isn't much use fer to reason
With you, I suppose.
I know how the dollars are burnin'
A hole in your pocket right now;
You'll blow 'em — what use to be learnin'
A lumberjack how?

They're waitin' down there fer you, brother:
The barkeep is loadin' the gin;
Each guy has some game er another
Fer takin' you in.
The dames thet are plastered an' painted
Are puttin' on powder fer fair —
The ladies whose kisses are tainted
Are waitin' you there.

THE SPORT (continued)

I've been through the mill, an' I know it —
I know jest the fool thet you are;
Oh, you'll be a sport, an' you'll throw it
In gobs on the bar.
It's "Drinks fer the house!" you'll be yellin';
The bums will be there to partake.
They'll laugh at the stories you're tellin',
An' gobble your stake.

While you have been pullin' a briar,
With beans an' sow-belly to chew,
The grafters have set by the fire
A-waitin' fer you —
The streak up their backs it is yellah,
An' life without work is the rule;
They'll say you're a prince of a fellah
An' think you're a fool.

THE SPORT (continued)

So work like a dog in the winter,
An' act like an ass in the spring;
Some guy with a jack-knife an' splinter
Will say you're a king.
It's blood, an' it's bone, an' it's muscle,
You're throwin' up there on the bar;
Next week fer a job you kin rustle,
The fool thet you are.

Oh, yes, they all think he's the candy,
A sport, a good fellow, who spends;
I hope, when they say you're a dandy,
You're proud of your friends.
When you know jest how little there's in it,
Will you hand out your good money still?
When you know they're but friends fer a minute?
You proba'ly will.

THE CODE

YOUR morals down there in the city
Are different morals from ours:
Both punish, ner pardon ner pity,
The serpent thet gits in the flow'rs;
Both punish, when punishment's comin',
An' yet on a different plan:
You gener'ly brand the woman—
We gener'ly shoot the man.

MEMORIES

WHAT is it most that the soul remembers
In the long years that come afterwhiles?
What are the thoughts of the long Decembers
When white and empty lie snowy miles?
What is the picture that grows and smiles
Deep in the heart of the glowing embers?

We dream no dream of the passing pleasures
That held us thralls in an idle hour,
We count no riches in heaping measures
Nor pulse again with a futile power —
Nay, a verdant tree or a crimson flower
Is the jewel then that the memory treasures.

MEMORIES (continued)

Oh, these are the visions that come long after
When face to face with our own sad soul;
We see a tree in the smoky rafter,
Behold a rose in the glowing coal;
The months of Wintertime backward roll
And the room is filled with the ghost of laughter.

For here is the tree that we knew together
When the ending year was a Springtime young;
The northman's pine and the Scotsman's heather,
The Briton's oak where the children swung —
Oh, these are the things by the night-wind sung
Above the roar of the wintry weather.

MEMORIES (continued)

For all the year is a time of clover
While Memory sits by the ingleside,
And Home goes forth with the world-wide rover
To ev'ry country o'er ev'ry tide;
And when the Autumn has drooped and died
We live our Summers, our Summers, over.

Life has its seasons and life its sorrows,
When the soul sits dreaming a dream like this,
When the hungry heart from the pale past borrows
A silenced voice or an ended kiss —
Yea, in our sorrow we find our bliss,
And weave of Yesterdays our To-morrows.

TO-DAY

SURE, this world is full of trouble —
I ain't said it ain't.
Lord! I've had enough, an' double,
Reason fer complaint.
Rain an' storm have come to fret me,
Skies were often gray;
Thorns an' brambles have beset me
On the road — but, say,
Ain't it fine to-day!

What's the use of always weepin',
Makin' trouble last?
What's the use of always keepin'
Thinkin' of the past?
Each must have his tribulation,
Water with his wine.
Life it ain't no celebration.
Trouble? I've had mine —
But to-day is fine.

TO-DAY (continued)

It's to-day thet I am livin',
  Not a month ago,
Havin', losin', takin', givin',
  As time wills it so.
Yesterday a cloud of sorrow
  Fell across the way;
It may rain again to-morrow,
  It may rain — but, say,
  Ain't it fine to-day!

YOU

TO each of us must come a day like this one
now and then,
A day when all the mists of old enwrap the
soul again.
Last night, a smile upon my lips, I gave
myself to rest,
To-day awoke by ancient ill, by hurts of
old, oppressed.

I know not why these shadows come, these
shades of vain desire,
I do but know they creeping come to sit
beside the fire;
And earth is but an empty place, and joy
has flickered out,
And faith has fallen by the hand, assassin
hand, of doubt.

YOU (continued)

I only ask in such an hour, when such shall
come to me,
I only ask in such an hour that You are
there to see,
I only ask in such an hour I need but
stretch my hand
And know that it shall feel the clasp of
You, who understand.

THE CITY

IN the land that is silent forever, asleep in the
star and the sun,
Where noiselessly wanders the river, where
voiceless the rivulets run,
Where men are not cultured nor clever, where
wealth is not wanted nor won,

Where the world moves in musical measure,
where aureate daffodils nod,
Where Nature gives freely her treasure, her
tree and her bloom and her sod,
With only an acre of azure to curtain the
presence of God,

I have heard in the stillness of slumber, have
heard in the nearness of night,
When the tasks of the day that encumber lie
hard on the sense and the sight,
A lorelei singing her number, The City her
song of delight.

THE CITY (continued)

I have heard, and have come at her calling,
have followed her glow in the sky,
I have come where in dirt she was sprawling and beckoning men such as I,
I have come to her creeping and crawling,
her love and her laughter to buy.

She has opened her door at my coming, has opened her arms at my tread;
Around her the roses were blooming, the passionate roses of red;
Around her mad music was humming, and music the words that she said.

About me went white arms and slender — for such had an Antony died;
I gazed on her womanly splendor; I drank of her lips, and she sighed;
I looked in her eyes that were tender, I looked in her eyes — and she lied.